

standard within our criminal justice system. For too long, Federal sentencing guidelines have placed far harsher penalties on crack users and dealers than on the users and dealers of powder cocaine.

As crack cocaine use became prevalent and made headlines in the mid-1980s, experts suggested that crack was significantly more addictive and linked to greater urban violence than its powder counterpart. Congress came parachuting in with mandatory sentencing minimums and, for good measure, established an exaggerated 100:1 sentencing ratio.

But like so many well-intended Congressional actions, the disparate mandatory sentences have had a devastating effect on our urban communities and racial minorities. The 1986 law has contributed to skyrocketing incarceration rates of low-level, non-violent drug-offenders and even allowed these street-level dealers to be punished more harshly than drug-kingpins.

We need to punish crimes, but this unjustified disparity has tied up law enforcement resources. It has encouraged skepticism and resentment within our African-American community and undermined public confidence in our nation's anti-drug laws.

Former major league baseball player Willie Mays Aikens is a classic example of the sentencing disparity. Aikens faced a 20-year sentence for crack distribution and other crimes. Upon his release, Aikens commented that, had he been caught with powdered cocaine, he might have faced a single year's sentence, rather than the 12½ he faced for crack distribution. Aikens was grateful that the Sentencing Commission revisited his case and allowed for an early release.

A broad coalition of civil rights, criminal justice, community-based, and faith-based organizations have joined forces to rectify the disparity. With the passage of the Fair Sentencing Act of 2010 (S.1789), the sentencing disparity is corrected from the current 100 to 1 ratio to 18 to 1, while establishing stiff new penalties for serious drug offenses.

I am delighted that Congress has decided to act. Upon his release, Aikens interviewed with ESPN. His words capture my sentiment. "All I can say, it's about time."

EXPRESSING CONDOLENCES TO PAKISTANI PEOPLE AFTER FLOODS

SPEECH OF

HON. MICHAEL E. McMAHON

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 15, 2010

Mr. McMAHON. Madam Speaker, thank you Chairman BERMAN for your leadership and for encouraging our government to help the people of Pakistan at this critical time.

Pakistan is suffering one of the worst natural disasters in recent history. The situation in Pakistan is dire. The United Nations estimates that more than 20 million Pakistanis have been displaced by the flooding, exceeding the combined total of individuals impacted by the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, the 2007 Myanmar Cyclone and the 2010 Haiti earthquake.

The U.S. Agency for International Development's, USAID joint endeavor with the U.S. military in Pakistan has already resulted in the evacuation of more than 10,000 people and the delivery of more than 2.7 billion pounds of relief supplies.

Like the tsunami that wreaked havoc upon northern Indonesia in 2004, the Pakistani floods threaten to propel Pakistan, a key ally, away from the successful economic progress and growth that it has made over the last decade.

This outcome would inevitably cost Pakistan thousands of more innocent lives and years worth of development and sustainability, further increasing both the humanitarian crisis domestically and the security threat worldwide.

Just two weeks ago, I personally wrote to Administrator Shah of USAID and commended his decision to use a portion of the Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan funding towards relief aid. As a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, I know how important a stable Pakistan is to global stability. Redirecting more funds provided through the Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act will demonstrate to our Pakistani partners that the United States is truly committed and will not abandon Pakistan in her time of need.

Pakistanis must know that we are in this for the long haul. Our dedication is not a matter of encroaching on Pakistani autonomy or manipulating a nation's internal politics.

The United States seeks to renew its commitment to the people of Pakistan through this tragedy and combat those who dare to take advantage of the suffering of innocent Pakistanis to further their radical beliefs.

On behalf of my over 30,000 Pakistani-American constituents, I urge this body to support this measure and its message, as well.

TRIBUTE TO DONALD ERB

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 16, 2010

Mr. LATHAM. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize Donald Erb, a World War II Army veteran from Boone County, Iowa, and to express my appreciation for his dedication and commitment to his country.

The Boone News Republican is currently running a series of articles that honors one Boone County veteran every Tuesday from Memorial Day to Veterans Day. Donald Erb was recognized on Tuesday, September 14. Below is the article in its entirety:

BOONE COUNTY VETERANS: DONALD ERB

(By Greg Eckstrom)

At 84 years old, Donald Erb might be considered one of the younger veterans of World War II, but still shares many characteristics with other WWII veterans of the time. He is disciplined, modest and sees military service as many did in his time . . . as more of a duty than an option.

Moving to Boone County with his family at a very young age in 1929, Erb graduated from Ogden High School and was immediately drafted into the Army as an infantry soldier in 1944.

"I graduated high school in 44 and went into the Army in 44," he said. "Just as soon

as I got out of high school. We went to a replacement depot and wherever they needed soldiers was where they sent you. I went to Camp Walters, Texas, for 16 weeks training and then we shipped to the Philippines."

Erb arrived in the Philippines just as the heavy fighting in Manila was finishing up and jungle warfare was going on outside the city. A machine gunner during his time stationed there, Erb recalls his fellow soldiers as being one of the best parts about his service.

"Buddies, friends," he said when asked about his favorite part of service. As far as what stood out to him most in his time overseas, however, the answer was the difficulty of fighting in the jungle.

"I think jungle warfare," he said. "All these supplies were brought in by water buffalo. Any injuries or anybody that was hit or killed was carried out by Filipino litter bearers. We didn't have any roads. As we took the jungle and got control of it, then bulldozers made roads."

As roads were bulldozed into the jungles, tanks were brought in to clean out the caves.

"They bulldozed a major road there and brought tanks in with flamethrowers and cleaned out the caves and stuff in there by using flamethrower tanks," he said.

Erb also recalls the final days of World War II, when atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Like many WWII veterans, he saw the bombs, and the resulting end of the war, as a Godsend.

"The atomic bomb, I would say, saved my life," he said. "Because every man, woman and child would have been armed in Japan. It probably saved the lives of a lot of people even though it killed a lot of people at the time. Every man, woman and child would have been fighting you otherwise. It would have been a bloodbath on both sides."

He also recalls the attitude among the soldiers upon receiving the news that the war had ended.

"The boozers, they went out and got drunk," he said. "But most of the soldiers just thanked God that it was over. Everybody was glad it was over."

Erb kept in contact with several of his fellow soldiers from the war, now good friends although their numbers have dwindled.

"I've got a buddy that was one day older than I am and lived in Eugene, Oregon," he said. "I've kept in contact with about 7 or 8 guys, but I think there's only three of us left. I was on the tail end of the war, and I'm 84, so these other guys are getting up in the 90s. This flight that we took up to Washington, D.C., one guy was celebrating his 94th birthday that day."

The flight Erb took, the Honor Flight, brought veterans to Washington D.C. where they had a chance to visit monuments, including the WWII memorial.

"It was a long day, but it was wonderful," he said. "We all had gold shirts on and these black hats. And when they dumped you out at the memorial, you had 305 guys out there with the gold shirts, and it was really kind of fascinating."

Being with other veterans, and seeing the World War II memorial, Erb said was a great experience. In his view, the war was difficult, but necessary.

"When you have to protect our country. . . World War II, we didn't have a whole lot of choice," he said. "We had both ends of the world moving in on us."

I commend Donald Erb for his many years of loyalty and service to our great Nation. It is an immense honor to represent him in the United States Congress, and I wish him all the best in his future endeavors.